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Victim or whore: The similarities and differences between victim's experiences of domestic violence and sex trafficking

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Abstract

This research review addresses the similarities and differences between domestic violence and sex trafficking victimization. While there is evidence that domestic violence and sex trafficking often co-occur, there is a large disparity in the understanding and interventions utilized by law enforcement as well as the services available for victims of each crime despite the considerable overlap of victimization. This paper explores current research regarding domestic violence and sex trafficking with a focus towards identifying areas of overlap and areas distinct to sex trafficking. Indications of five unique aspects of sex trafficking were found including: 1) exploitation (including economic/financial exploitation), 2) sexual activity outside the primary relationship, 3) victimization by people outside the primary relationship that do not help or assist victims, 4) the participation in a unique subculture: 5) and the experience of identifying with a stigmatized role/label. Currently, services for sex trafficking victims and domestic violence victims are rarely combined except in settings specifically serving sex trafficking victims. The understanding of these differences will allow for more informed enforcement of sex trafficking laws and expansion of service providers for sex trafficking victims.

Introduction

The United States began paying attention to domestic violence as a social problem in the 1960s with the development of shelters, hotlines, counseling and legal services. The research has well explored and validated the experiences of domestic violence victims and their social service needs including security, shelter, victim advocacy, orders of protection and therapeutic interventions to address the traumatic experiences and resulting trauma symptoms. In stark contrast, sex trafficking victims have only recently begun to receive organized and targeted services, beginning with the clarification of what sex trafficking is and a clear demarcation of its illegality in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) (2000). The TVPA (2000) defined sex trafficking as a situation in which a “commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age.”.

Despite the fact that sex trafficking has only recently been formally defined, its occurrence dates as back many centuries; the first social policy proposed to address this issue was enacted international doctrine written in 1902, entitled the International Agreement for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic. This agreement was to prevent women and girls from being ‘procured for immoral purposes abroad’ (www.protectionproject.com). In the United States, the Mann Act was passed in 1910, which “forbids the transporting of a person across state or international lines for prostitution or other immoral purposes” (www.protectionproject.org).

Domestic violence and sex trafficking often co-occur and yet little has been explored about the intersection of these two important issues. This is somewhat surprising given the extensive pool of domestic violence research available as well as the fact that victims of sex trafficking frequently report being a victim of domestic violence, and some domestic violence victims report being sex trafficked (Bruggeman & Keyes, 2009).

Domestic violence has been suggested to be a ‘push factor’ for sex trafficking (Polaris Project, 2010), as domestic violence ‘pushes’ victims into sex trafficking by creating a highly exploitive situation in which victims have few financial or social supports. The suggestion that the pimp-prostitute or trafficker-victim relationship is similar to domestic violence relationships has also been made; Okun (1986) proposed that being sex trafficked is a special type of woman abuse and the relationship between a pimp and prostitute is intimate and often resembles wife-battering relationships. Williamson & Cluse-Tolar (2002) found in their interviews with six street level prostituted women with pimps that all of the women reported experiencing unpredictable violence combined with a sense of love and admiration. This confusing combination contributed to their staying in the relationship, as is often the case in domestic violence relationships.

While these examples demonstrate how elements of abuse experienced by women in domestic violence relationships are mirrored in sex trafficking situations, a number of the issues identified in sex trafficking situations rarely occur in domestic violence relationships and experiences. The intent of this research paper is twofold; we first seek to identify the similarities and differences between domestic violence and sex trafficking for the purpose of informing victim service providers including law enforcement, social services, mental health, medical services, legal services and court personnel. We also aim to enhance the discussion of and provision of services for sex trafficking survivors, as they have relatively very limited access to specific services compared to the wide array of services available to domestic violence victims across the United States.

Domestic Violence and Sex Trafficking

Domestic violence relationships occur between family or household members and they are characterized by an unequal access to power wherein one member of the relationship maintains power and control over the other through the use of physical, verbal, and emotional abuse (Naylor, Petch, & Azam Ali, 2011). For this research review, domestic violence will be operationalized to specifically include violence situations that occur within an intimate relationship and excludes child to parent violence, sibling violence, and violence between people related to each other. Intimate partner violence is

a leading cause of injury and death among women in the United States (Barnett, Millier-Perrin, & Perrin, 2005) and findings from the national Violence Against Women Survey estimate that 1.5 million women are physically assaulted or raped each year by an intimate partner (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). The experiences of domestic violence victims range in severity, from verbal threats to extreme physical violence or death; the consequences of such abuse for the victim vary as well, often including depression, low self-esteem, and fear (Barnett, et al., 2005), among other peripheral consequences such as isolation from positive support and complex economic instability.

Similar to situations of domestic violence, sex trafficking relationships are characterized by unequal access to power. It appears that pimps/traffickers informally educated themselves on the effectiveness of domestic violence tactics; borrowing and utilizing them to better maintain power and control over their victims. These tactics are shown to them by their peer social interactions and community influences. In contrast, our system (and society) has been slow to borrow lessons learned from domestic violence victimization and apply them to sex trafficking victimization; thus, the pimp/trafficker has had the upper hand for quite some time. Cultural stereotypes have minimized the abusive nature of the pimp's role and narrowed our perception of who or what s/he is (Flowers, 1998). There has been an increasing acceptance of the role of the pimp based, in part, on positive, or at least tacitly accepted, portrayals of pimps in popular culture to include the Academy Award nominated films and the integration of the term "pimp" into the vernacular as a positive descriptor.

In reality, a pimp plays a primary role in a trafficking network and controls one or more women working for him/her by using verbal, emotional, and physical abuse (Williamson & Cluse-Tolar, 2002). While it is often difficult to distinguish the experiences of women in prostitution who are- or are not- victims of trafficking, this review will focus specifically on prostituted individuals who are selling or trading sex as a result of force, fraud, or coercion as this coincides with the federal definition of sex trafficking (TVPA, 2000). This definition encompasses the experiences of women and girls in pimp-controlled prostitution (Williamson & Baker, 2009) and those who are trafficked by other relationships including husbands or boyfriends (Giobbe, 1993).

It is difficult to assess the prevalence of prostitution in the United States (Mitchell, Finkelhor, & Wolak, 2009) as it is an illegal and stigmatized behavior, and it is equally difficult to identify the number of sex trafficking victims. The Federal Bureau of Investigation estimated in 2007, 77,600 adults (98%) and juveniles (2%) were arrested for prostitution involvement (including soliciting, pimping and prostituting) throughout the United States (Puzzanchera, Adams, & Kang, 2009), and research comparing pimp/trafficker-controlled and independent prostitution has estimated that between 22% (Williamson & Baker, 2009) and 40% (Norton-Hawk, 2004) of prostituted adults report working under the control of a pimp/trafficker. Regarding juvenile victims, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (2012) estimates over 1.5 million children run away each year and that these children are at the highest risk for engaging in survival sex (to meet basic needs) or for being recruited and trafficked by a pimp. These numbers clearly indicate that the sexual exploitation of minors and adults is a significant problem in the United States and will require increasing investment in social services and law enforcement education to attempt to address the needs of the victims.

History

Necessary to an ability to understand the disparity in services and treatment of domestic violence and sex trafficking is an understanding of the historical origins and the evolution of our societal response to each. Domestic violence has long been recognized as a social ill in our society. At first considered a husband's right of chastisement, our society's first affirmative response to "limit" the abusive behavior to appropriate bounds was to regard it as a private issue between families - one appropriate to deal with by drawing the curtains closed and addressing in the privacy of the home unless permanent injury was

involved.¹

This family privacy approach reflected the recognition of the sanctity of the home and the increasing discomfort felt while witnessing public beatings – at least those done by a man against a Caucasian woman. Although this shift was a positive reflection of the increased recognition that women were more than mere chattel, it also had the troubling effect of making the practice less visible to society, without necessarily reducing the practice itself. In essence, the right of husbands to “reasonably” punish their wives was reaffirmed, but with the recommendation that it was better suited for occurring behind closed doors.² In fact more than a century later husbands were still able to rape their wives without fear of prosecution.³ In 1976, Nebraska was the first state to abolish the marital rape exemption.⁴

That same year, Pennsylvania was the first state to pass legislation that made civil protection orders available to battered women (U.S. Department of Justice, 2013). As other states followed suit, enforcement problems arose. After decades of letting families sort these matters out themselves police routinely refused to enforce domestic violence laws (Saunders & Size, 1986). As a result, advocates pushed for and passed mandatory arrest laws (Fedders, 1997). Lawyers began filing equal protection suits on behalf of abused women and the domestic violence movement was well underway.⁵ The number of focused hotlines, shelters and counseling services available to victims of domestic violence grew.

Perhaps the largest victory for battered women occurred in 1994 with the passing of the Violence

¹ Calvin Bradley v. The State (December Term 1824) Walker 156 **Supreme Court of Mississippi**. Ruling that moderate chastisement of wife is permitted. See also., The State v. Jesse Black (June Term, 1864) 60 N.C. 262 Supreme Court of North Carolina. (A husband is responsible for the acts of his wife, and he is required to govern his household, and for that purpose the law permits him to use towards his wife such a degree of force as is necessary to control an unruly temper and make her behave herself; and unless some permanent injury be inflicted, or there be an excess of violence, or such a degree of cruelty as shows that it is inflicted to gratify his own bad passions, the law will not invade the domestic forum or go behind the curtain. It prefers to leave the parties to themselves, as the best mode of inducing them to make the matter up and live together as man and wife should.

² *State v. Oliver*, Supreme Court of North Carolina. (January 01, 1874) 70 N.C. 60 the court held “From motives of public policy and in order to preserve the sanctity of the domestic circle, the Courts will not listen to trivial complaints.... If no permanent injury has been inflicted, nor malice, cruelty, nor dangerous violence shown by the husband, it is better to draw the curtain, shut out the public gaze, and leave the parties to forget and forgive.

³ 79 Md. Op. Atty. Gen. 119 (Md.A.G.), 1994 WL 469880 (Md.A.G.) Office of the Attorney General State of Maryland Opinion No. 94-042 August 4, 1994 “The Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts was the first American court to recognize the **marital** exemption for **rape**, holding that it would always be a defense to rape to show marriage to the victim. *Commonwealth v. Fogerty*, 74 Mass. 489 (1857) Until very recently, virtually all courts and state legislatures adopted the view that a husband could not be convicted of raping his wife. See, e.g., *Anonymous*, 89 So. 462 (Ala. 1921); *State v. Davis*, 229 A.2d 842 (N.H. 1967); *Commonwealth v. Schilling*, 431 A.2d 1088 (Pa. 1981)” See also., ³ 43 *Clev. St. L. Rev.* 351,(1995) THE MARITAL RAPE EXEMPTION: EVOLUTION TO EXTINCTION

⁴ Nebraska 1976 NEB. REV. STAT. § 28-319 (1991)

⁵ *Thurman v. City of Torrington*, 595 F. Supp. 1521 (D. Conn. 1984) (Wife and son brought a civil rights action alleging a violation of the 14th Amendment’s equal protection clause because police protection was fully provided to persons abused by someone with whom the victim had no domestic relationship, but the police consistently afforded lesser protection when the victim was a woman abused or assaulted by a spouse or boyfriend or when a child was abused by a father or stepfather).

Against Women Act (VAWA) spearheaded by then Senator Joe-Biden.⁶ This Act made possible an exponential growth in victim services, assistance and police enforcement. Ultimately, VAWA led to increased police training and education, just as federal funding and the large number of studies conducted on domestic violence resulted in increased victim services within courthouses. The long embattled history of the domestic violence movement in this country has provided ample data related to the experiences of victims and their social service needs including shelter and mental health services.

In contrast to domestic violence, sex trafficking is a relatively new concept, as anyone selling or trading sex has historically been labeled a prostitute, regardless of the reason compelling him or her to do so. Often considered the ‘world’s oldest profession’ prostitution has been both maligned and embraced throughout history. Examples of prostitution have been found in ancient Greece, the Orient, and Babylonia, among other societies (Flowers, 1998), and the terms under which a society accepted or rejected prostitution have changed throughout the course of history. Ideas regarding who a prostitute is and what a prostitute does have also changed over time. Throughout most of American history, prostitution has been associated with moral depravity and promiscuity, and both legal retribution and social stigmatization have been directed towards the person (typically female) who sells sexual services rather than the men who purchase her (Esselstyn, 1968; Flowers, 1998; Wahab, 2002). Esselstyn (1968) described a commonly held notion that a prostitute is someone who provides sexual services to “anyone on a contract basis” (p. 124), and who is emotionally indifferent towards clients. This definition completely excludes the possibility that people may provide sexual services against their will, and indeed, until the TVPA in 2000, victims of trafficking and those who recognized their plight were left without a framework to protect, provide, and advocate for these victims.

Fortunately, individuals like Norma Hotaling, herself a survivor of sex trafficking, began this work long before legislative efforts reflected the reality of this problem. Hotaling founded Standing Against Global Exploitation (SAGE) in San Francisco, California in 1992; among the first organizations devoted to assisting victims of sex trafficking, it remains a reputable program that offers a variety of services to victims in the San Francisco area (SAGE, 2012). In addition to the services available in California, Farley (2012) identifies only 13 other states that have organizations specifically helping prostituted or sexually exploited individuals. Of these organizations, a few appear to offer long-term residential programming (e.g. the DIGNITY program in Arizona), a few offer transitional housing, and the remaining offer case management and out-patient services. Another intervention option available in some states is the prostitution diversion program. There are at least four such diversion programs, though the requirements and services provided vary by state; some are supervised and monitored by judges while others offer case management and run as a focused program (Roe-Sepowitz, et al., 2011). The effectiveness of each intervention type has not been compared, but researchers have identified useful components of residential treatment, community-based case management, and diversion programs in helping women exit prostitution.

Law Enforcement

Local law enforcement began to shift their perspective regarding domestic violence in the 1990s as laws were developed to require an arrest and the enforcement of protective orders. This required a shift in the view of law enforcement officers and prosecutors from the ‘private family matter’ perspective to one that recognizes that the battering another is a crime (Weissman, 2007). Law enforcement currently address domestic violence with specially trained units and all officers are required to respond to domestic violence calls. This paradigm shift has slowly begun to happen within law enforcement with regards to sex trafficking with increasing federal and state laws created to assist in the enforcement of sex trafficking

⁶ Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, Pub. L. No. 103-322, 108 Stat. 1796 (1994).

crimes. However, there has been no greater influence on this change than police/community relationships.

As police departments across the country began to adopt Community Based Policing (CBP) philosophies (Skolnick & Bayley, 1988) that placed a premium on police/community interaction to create collaborative responses to criminal and quality of life issues, the concept of police departments being responsive to community concerns became an embedded part of the law enforcement culture. The same is being found in the law enforcement response to sex trafficking. As more attention has been paid to the issue of sex trafficking by politicians and academics, the community has recognized its impact on community safety and its residents. Once the realization was made that the victims were in many cases their family, friends or neighbors, community leaders became acutely aware of sex trafficking as a pressing social condition requiring immediate action more so than a shadowy culture that was hidden from view or, when publicized, passed over with a wink and a nod and the identification of the victim as a whore who wanted to be selling sex.

As such, dialogue has begun between the police and the community that has led to changes in attitudes among police officers regarding the distinction between sex trafficking victim and criminal suspect of prostitution. Driving these cultural and perceptual changes are partnerships between the police, the community, service providers, academics, the faith based community and, perhaps most importantly, the survivors of sex trafficking. As former gang members are often used to mediate gang disputes in affected communities or provide a first-person view of the realities of gang life to law enforcement, survivors of sex trafficking occupy the dual space of survivor and community member. Together with other segments of the community, survivors are providing first person accounts of the impact of sex trafficking on the individual as well as the community. And it is with this new knowledge that law enforcement nationwide is entering the field of sex trafficking investigations and response.

This shift has required the understanding that being forced to selling sex (through force, fraud or coercion) is a victimization of sex trafficking instead of a criminal offender of prostitution. Some communities including large metropolitan police departments still do not have department-wide sex trafficking trained officers or specialized units to address sex trafficking situations with some local law enforcement officials reporting that they do not believe that human trafficking is a problem in their local community (Urban Institute, 2012).

Experiences Similar to Domestic Violence and Sex Trafficking Victims

The following section outlines the characteristics similar to domestic violence and sex trafficking victimization situations including secrecy, violence, dominance and power, rules, psychological abuse and instability, relationship-based, grooming, traumatic events, economic control, barriers to disclosing victimization, consequences of victimization, and challenges of escaping/leaving. Please see Table 1 for a diagram of the similarities and differences.

Secrecy

Victims of sex trafficking and domestic violence often hide their situations. Domestic violence has been called a hidden phenomenon with victims who are hesitant to disclose their victimization even in medical or clinical settings (Gortner, Jacobson, Berns & Gottman, 1997). This hesitancy is accredited to a victim's evaluation of their situation and the realization that they will be the recipient of more violence and possibly murder if they do disclose the victimization and their abuser finds out (Gortner et al, 1997). Other reasons that victims do not disclose their victimization include self-blame and the fear of not being believed which leads to increased secrecy and the fear of involvement of child protective services (Gortner et al, 1997). Sex trafficking victims also maintain secrecy regarding the abuse they experience at the hands of their trafficker, but their need for secrecy is further complicated by the fact that this relationship facilitates the sex exchanges they are involved in, which are always hidden from the general public, as they are illegal in almost all of the United States. Due to this secrecy, victims of DV and sex trafficking feel that they are alone and that telling someone, even a helping professional, may not be safe.

Violence

Physical violence is not a constant in either domestic violence or sex trafficking relationships but it has been reported by both groups to include resulting broken bones, sexual violence, bruises, head injuries, mouth and teeth injuries, stab wounds, vaginal pain and bleeding (Raymond & Hughes, 2001). Similar to battering, sex trafficking victims reported frequently being struck in the face and head resulting in face, head, mouth and teeth injuries (Raymond & Hughes, 2001). Violence used by Pimps/traffickers and domestic violence offenders goes beyond the obvious physical abuse and threats and includes the withholding of food and safety, constant instability, erratic and unpredictable moods and swift changes in the location they live.

Dominance and power

In both sex trafficking and DV, there is a wide variation in the use of dominance but it is a key variable in keeping both domestic violence and sex trafficking victims in their situations. They feel like they have no power in the relationship and no choice. The relationships have underlying pathology with an imbalance of power, which leads to the exertion of coercive control by one partner (Coleman & Straus, 1986). In DV and sex trafficking, dominance extends to whom they may associate with and what they can do as well as if they are allowed to work or keep any of their earnings.

Rules

Victims in both domestic violence and sex trafficking have reported extensive rules that they know not to break “or else”. This is part of *role grooming* for domestic violence and sex trafficking victims (Courtois, 2008). Examples of rules in a DV situation may be to keep the children quiet, keep the house clean and dinner ready on time or not to complain when they (the abusive partner) comes home late, drinks to excess, fails to pay the bills, or sleeps with other people. Examples of rules in a sex trafficking situation include a predetermined quota on how much they need to earn, that they can never say no to a date, and that they need to be “in pocket” at all times (that is so the pimp always knows where they are so they cannot run away).

Psychological abuse and instability

Cruel or degrading treatment, acts of recurrent criticism, isolation and dominance as well as verbal aggression have been found in domestic violence research to cause the partner to be fearful and to have low self-esteem (O’Leary, 1999). A key tool in keeping a victim under the control of an abuser or trafficker/pimp is the unexpected. Sex trafficking victims have identified being taken out of their home or geographic area by their pimp to sever their support system as well as to keep them feeling unsure of themselves. Just as the victim may think they understand the rules, the batterer/pimp changes them to keep them feeling unstable.

Relationship-based

As previously stated, for violence to constitute domestic violence there must be a requisite relationship between the abuser and victim, whether it be sexual, romantic, intimate or familial. In sex trafficking, many pimps/traffickers are mothers, uncles, boyfriends, husbands etc. Some pimps traffic those known to them, others use the Romeo technique to get the victim to fall in love with them and then ‘turn them out’ as victims/prostitutes (Williamson & Cluse-Tolar, 2002). In some cases of sex trafficking, pimps begin their exploitation through a period of grooming during which they assume the role of the victim’s boyfriend through treating her well, giving her gifts and compliments (Kotrla, 2010). The goal of this initial boyfriend behavior or pseudo-relationship behavior is to gain her loyalty and trust (Kotrla, 2010).

Grooming

From the incest literature, role grooming has emerged as the method by which perpetrators skillfully appear trustworthy, exploit dynamics of awareness about the abusive situation and distort memories of the abuse to suppress the victims knowledge (Veldhuls & Freyd, 1999). Offenders choose victims that appeal to them and who will not speak about their abuse, and if they speak, they will not be believed (Elloitt, Browne, & Kilcoyne, 1995).

The relationships within domestic violence and sex trafficking between the victim and offender often occur over extended time periods during which the victim is conditioned to receive the abuse and not to tell believing that if they do tell (or leave) that they will be blamed or not believed. Domestic violence victims are also taught to believe that they do not deserve any better and that the violence is merely a sign of how much the abuser loves them. Sex trafficking victims report that they thought they were in love with a kind, generous loving person and then they got turned out...sometimes after a month, sometimes after years of involvement.

Traumatic events

The victims of domestic violence and sex trafficking are constantly being subjected to more and more traumatic events. This can lead to having more and more difficulty seeing what to do to change the situation (leave/escape). Courtois (2008) named this type of repetitive and cumulative traumatic exposure, complex trauma, with examples being sex trafficking and domestic violence.

Financial control

Access to money in both of these types of situations gives the victim choices (to leave, take kids etc). Pimps often do not allow their victims enough money to buy a burger and definitely not enough to leave. Postmus, Plummer, McMahon, Murshid and Kim (2012) found that 79% of domestic violence victims experienced some sort of economic exploitative behavior as well as 79% reporting some form of economic control. The lack of economic control is key to preventing domestic violence and sex trafficking victims from escaping (Song & Thompson, 2005).

Barriers to disclosing their victimization

Domestic violence and sex trafficking offenders often create situations that result in hostility towards victims who report their abuse. Forms of this hostility include; reactions of denial, blame for instigating the abuse or being told to forget about it (Veldhuls & Freyd, 1999). Roesler and Wind (1994) found that among 228 female abuse survivors, their primary reasons for not disclosing their abuse were shame/guilt, fear for their safety, loyalty to the perpetrator, fear of being blamed or punished, and fear for the safety of their family. Rose et al (2011) found that mental health service users identified barriers to disclosure of domestic violence to mental health professionals to include: fear of the consequences including social service involvement and consequent child protection proceedings, fear that they would not be believed, fear that telling would lead to more violence, the hidden nature of the violence (it is not obvious to outsiders in some cases), and feelings of shame. Farley (2003) identified barriers to accessing services for sex trafficking victims to include fear of: prosecution, deportation related to lack of legal documentation for being in the United States, a child welfare investigation, and retaliation from their pimp or trafficker. Other barriers to services for sex trafficking victims may include a fear of not being taken seriously or experiencing additional violence, insults and humiliation from the police (Haskell, 2010). Sex trafficking victims may not be aware that they can access domestic violence services, once they do access those services, they may experience the 'judgment' from those who are in a position to respond to the domestic violence (Haskell, 2010).

Consequences of victimization:

Howard, Trevillion & Agnew-Davies (2010) in their exploratory study of how mental health services should serve domestic violence victims found that many domestic violence victims report chronic, severe and often long-term mental health problems resulting from their victimization and

traumatic experiences. In Nathanson, Shorey, Tirone and Rhatagan's (2012) exploration of mental health and interpersonal violence in a community sample, of the 94 cases, more than half met the diagnostic criteria for depression and posttraumatic stress disorder. They found that psychological abuse was the most significant predictor of both posttraumatic stress disorder and depression. Victims of multiple traumas such as victims of domestic violence and sex trafficking, report posttraumatic stress disorder and other resulting problems including disassociation, substance abuse, self-hatred, risk-taking and self-destructive behaviors, problems with relationships including family and children, attachment issues, and somatic and medical problems (Courtois, 2008). Physical health consequences of domestic violence and sex trafficking victims do not seem to greatly differ. Research on intimate partner violence has found it to be associated with increased mortality, injuries and disability, chronic pain, reproductive disorders, worse pregnancy outcomes and poor general health (Plichta, 2004).

Challenges of escaping/leaving

Research has shown that leaving a domestic violence relationship takes numerous attempts with the average being between 5-7 attempts before finally leaving the relationship (Michigan Women's Justice and Clemency Project, 2013) The process of leaving an abusive relationship, either sex trafficking or domestic violence, was identified by Griffing et al (2002) including 'relocation, economic instability, legal actions, child custody issues, disruption of social networks' (p. 307) as well as fearing for their life and difficulties ending their emotional connection with their batterer. Another issue that is important to consider but has received limited research attention is the batterer/trafficker keeping important documents such as birth certificates, passports or bank information away from the victim.

Experiences Unique to Sex Trafficking Victims

The following issues are characteristics of sex trafficking situations that have been found to be regularly present and commonly experienced by victims. These issues include exploitation (including economic/financial exploitation), sexual activity outside the primary relationship, victimization by people outside the primary relationship that do not help or assist victims, the participation in a unique subculture, and the experience of identifying with a stigmatized role/label. Domestic violence victims may experience any number of these issues in some way, but they are not often discussed as a common or integral experience of domestic violence victimization and we argue that each of these issues are among the defining characteristics of a sex trafficking experience.

Exploitation

Victims of sex trafficking are, by definition, involved in an exploitative relationship in which a trafficker uses love and/or fear to maintain physical and psychological control over his/her victims (Flowers, 1998). While exploitation can be found across many types of abusive relationships including domestic violence and child abuse, women and girls in trafficking situations are uniquely victimized by abusers whose primary motivation for entering and maintaining the relationship is to profit from exploitation; they do this by maintaining control over victims who are their source of revenue (Williamson & Cluse-Tolar, 2002). While victims may have their needs met and may even enjoy some degree of wealth or comfort (Weinkauff, 2010), the reality of sex trafficking is that the victim never gets an equitable share of the money for the work that they do.

Raphael, Reichert, and Powers (2010) label this type of exploitation 'coercive control', and explain that coercion can include verbal and emotionally abusive behavior (e.g. threatening harm or to end a romantic relationship), but there is a unique emphasis on economic exploitation in trafficking situations, as traffickers maintain control over their victims by keeping them caught in a cycle of financial dependence. A majority of trafficked women and girls report that the money they made engaging in prostitution was taken from them. They describe other forms of economic exploitation that pimps/traffickers utilize to maintain control, including threatening to kick them out of the home, providing drugs to encourage addiction (or withholding drugs from them), and claiming a victim is

indebted to the trafficker after providing them with food, clothing, or gifts (Raphael, et al., 2010). While many of these forms of economic exploitation may occur in domestic violence and other abusive relationships, they are inextricably tied to sex trafficking relationships. Williamson and Cluse-Tolar (2002) highlight the economic motivation in sex trafficking relationships, explaining that often times, pimps/traffickers choose to end the relationship when the prostituted woman or girl has “produced all she can for the pimp”; she is “discarded and the pimp finds himself a new ho to make him money” (p.1079).

Sexual Activity Outside the Primary Relationship

Sex trafficking victims may engage in selling a variety of sexual acts in any number of settings including on the street, in hotels, out of homes or brothels, at truck stops, through an escort service, a place of business such as a massage parlor (Mitchell, Finkelhor, & Wolak, 2009; Williamson & Folaron, 2003), and most recently via the Internet (McCabe, 2008). Regardless of the avenue in which they are sold, having sex outside the primary relationship (with their pimp or trafficker) is essential to their role in that relationship. Mitchell, et al. (2009) report that minor victims of trafficking may see between 1 and 40 clients per week, and adult victims have reported seeing an average of 10 clients (or as many as 40) per day (Raphael, et al., 2010). It is difficult to estimate the length of time these victims engage such a high number of clients, but given the economic motivation for traffickers, it is essential to see this aspect of a trafficking victim’s experience as something that should be specifically addressed.

Customers

Customers of sex trafficked women and girls play another role in their victimization when they engage their services, do not acknowledge or recognize the trafficking situation, and thus do not help them leave. Results from a qualitative study of minor victims of sex trafficking (n = 13) in the Midwestern United States indicated the only means of leaving a trafficker that participants described were 1) by making the personal decision to escape or 2) through being rescued by law enforcement (Williamson & Prior, 2009). This means that throughout their experience being trafficked, the trafficking victims came into contact with men who chose to pay for their services but did not provide a means of escape. Male customers may have their own personal reasons for keeping their exchange with a trafficking victim a secret; namely, they are engaging in an illegal activity (especially if they know or suspect the victim is a minor) by purchasing sex and they may wish to keep this activity from others in their life (Monto, 2004). The trafficking victim’s customer enters their environment to touch, observe, and speak to them only to leave without providing help. When the customer leaves, the victim is again confronted with the reality that someone outside the abusive relationship bore witness to their abuse and merely walked away. The customer’s willing participation in their exploitation re-victimizes the women and girls. While it is possible that customers do occasionally engage in helping victims leave a trafficker, it is not the norm; instead, law enforcement is charged with patrolling the streets and developing ever more sophisticated methods to identify victims being sold via the Internet (Wells, Mitchell, & Ji, 2012).

Domestic violence victims may have relationships with people (e.g. family members, friends, co-workers) who both have knowledge of the abuse and encourage them to stay with their abuser for the family’s sake (Moore, 2003). In these situations, domestic violence victims are confronted with people who have the ability or means to help them escape an abusive situation, but choose not to help. This is a possibility for domestic violence victims, but it is not necessary in order for someone to remain entrenched in the cycle of domestic violence; conversely, in order for sex trafficking victims to continue their work, customers must continue to opt out of helping.

Culture

Williamson and Baker (2009) reported that among a sample of 53 prostituted women, 12 were involved in “pimp-controlled” prostitution and described using language that was unique only to those involved in this experience. They used and understood terminology including ‘wife-in-laws’ (i.e. other women/girls working for the same pimp), ‘quota’ (i.e. the amount of money a woman/girl is required to

make for her pimp on a given day), ‘choosing up’, and being ‘turned out’ (the initiation period) (Williamson & Baker, 2009). In her study of 16 female street-level sex workers, Weinkauff (2010) confirmed the use of many of these terms in a different geographical area of the United States, in addition to other terms including ‘my folks’ (i.e. fictive kin/community), ‘daddy’ (referring to a pimp), and terms to indicate disloyalty (e.g. ‘out of pocket’, ‘reckless eyeballing’, ‘renegade’). These are terms and connotations that remain largely unknown in the dominant culture and serve to isolate trafficking victims from positive social support as they become further entrenched in “the life” of prostitution (Weinkauff, 2010; Williamson & Folaron, 2003) and others outside their subculture are unable to relate. A specific example of the unique culture that trafficking victims are recruited into is given by Williamson and Prior (2009); they describe the role of a ‘bottom girl’ who is closest to the pimp and maintains a position at the top of the hierarchy in a pimp’s ‘stable’. This woman has often been with the pimp for the longest period of time, teaches newly recruited trafficking victims how to make money efficiently, enforces the rules, and may not be required to bring in as much money relative to the other trafficking victims (Weinkauff, 2010). If a woman does not like the pimp she currently works for, she may ‘choose up’ by going to work for another pimp; however, if she decides to stay with a pimp then she is forced to endure any abuse he/she inflicts upon her (Williamson & Baker, 2009). This scenario demonstrates the very specific cultural norms that victims of trafficking are groomed to accept and uphold.

While domestic violence victims may experience isolation from other people, cultures, and institutions when they are in an abusive relationship, their early experiences in the relationship do not necessarily coincide with the initiation into a uniquely specific and isolated culture in contrast to sex trafficking victims. The trafficking culture often becomes something sex trafficking victims strongly identify with (Williamson & Folaron, 2003) and the language they learn to use among other people in this subculture plays a powerful role in forming and maintaining the hierarchical relationships that they engage in (Weinkauff, 2010). When they decide to leave or escape, these experiences can serve as a distinctive cultural barrier to exiting.

Stigma

Many people remain largely uninformed about the complicated situation domestic violence victims often find themselves in, and thus have difficulty understanding why these individuals remain with an abuser, return to an abuser after being victimized by them, or commit crimes (e.g. burglary, drug offenses) while being threatened, controlled, or harassed by their abuser (Moore, 2003). Despite these misconceptions, domestic violence victims (whether they stay or leave their abusers) are still considered victims of a crime. They are afforded specific services, legal protections, and are considered victims or survivors- both terms that indicate they did not choose to be abused. Unfortunately, sex trafficking victims are not afforded the same perspective. Sex trafficking victims are often not first identified as victims but as criminals, blamed for their victimization and stigmatized by the labels we place upon (Kotrla, 2010) them whether a legal term for the crime they committed (i.e. prostitute/prostitution) or slang terms used to demean them (i.e. slut, whore). In a study of juvenile victims of sex trafficking, Mitchell, et al. (2009) found that juveniles involved in prostitution cases were more likely to be treated as victims (rather than delinquents) by law enforcement if they were younger, appeared frightened or their appearance was dirty, and if their case came to the attention of the police via an outside report. If they did not fit this profile, they were likely to be considered a delinquent and treated as such. While attention and awareness of minor sex trafficking continues to grow and juveniles are increasingly seen as victims due to changes in legislation, extensive prevention and awareness campaigns against the victimization of children, adults are not typically offered the same changing perspective on their experience as a victim of trafficking. Women may not feel able to trust law enforcement with information regarding customer-related violence because they have not been protected in the past (Williamson & Cluse-Tolar, 2002). They are reluctant to seek help and blame themselves, and may feel rejected by positive social support for their involvement in prostitution (Williamson & Folaron, 2003). They may also be involved in other

illegal activities that result in criminal charges (Maxwell & Maxwell, 2000); these charges can be an additional barrier to entering legitimate employment.

Implications

Despite the five unique attributes of victimization identified as being present in all sex trafficking situations, victims of domestic violence and sex trafficking are much more alike in their victimization experiences than different. This is an important realization as most law enforcement and social service providers consider sex trafficking to be a wildly different and foreign experience that requires specialized training and methods of treatment. This is true only with regard to the collection of evidence and building of complex sex trafficking cases. How clients are treated and interacted with by law enforcement should not differ. This review of the literature demonstrates that domestic violence and sex trafficking victims' service needs are very similar and many can be provided through domestic violence-focused services. Additional services addressing the things that differentiate sex trafficking from domestic violence is also important to consider. The view that domestic violence and sex trafficking victims have much in common will be critical in the development of targeted intervention and treatment services for sex trafficking victims which are still in their infancy. Addressing sex trafficking victimization will require communication, collaboration, mutual respect and an understanding of the roles of each team member to assist the client into successful treatment (Miller, Veltkamp, & Kraus, 1997). Various normative implications can be drawn from the aforementioned commonalities and differences in victimization between domestic violence and sex trafficking. It is the responsibility of the legal community to ensure that comprehensive laws are developed that address the nuanced nature of these crimes and the resulting harm to the individual victim as well as society as a whole. While there has been a healthy discussion and development of laws pertaining to sex trafficking across international borders, there is a dearth of laws and legal services targeted at domestic sex trafficking. Legal advocates and attorneys working with domestic violence and sex trafficking victims would be well advised to develop policies that establish adequate protection and legal services for victims of both crimes. Drawing from the extensive history of domestic violence policies and the commonalities with sex trafficking much of the legal services currently available for victims of domestic violence could be extended to victims of sex trafficking. For instance, in all 50 states, as well as the District of Columbia, victims of domestic violence are able to obtain orders of protection against their abusers within hours of filing a petition. In contrast, trafficking victims lack this swift access to legal remedies that would enhance their protection. While it is unclear whether protection orders would be equally well suited for the trafficking victim and pimp relationship, it warrants further consideration. It may be that this remedy could be modified to better suit the needs of the trafficking victim. Potential procedural and substantive legal modifications that would enhance trafficking victim safety should be considered to increase victim comfort and willingness to seek assistance from the legal system. An example of policies that warrant further research and consideration include; guaranteed immunity from arrest and or prosecution for prostitution when trafficking victims come forward for a protection order from their pimp, victim placement in temporary safe houses until the protection order is served, protective detail of the victim immediately following service of a protection order as to prevent retaliation and an opportunity to gather evidence for arrest and whether a police officer should be on call or available when a petition for a protection order is filled out by a petitioner to determine if sufficient evidence and testimony exists to also obtain a warrant for the pimp's arrest. If it were possible to have the respondent/pimp simultaneously arrested and served with a protection order, this may help prevent the trafficked victims safety from being compromised. The aforementioned merely represent a small sampling of potential expansion and modification of services available to victims of domestic violence for victims of sex trafficking. It is the responsibility of every service provider to consider additional possibilities and to weigh the effectiveness, benefits and costs of adoption and implementation. With the cooperation and collaboration of all service providers in the domestic violence and sex trafficking fields it is possible to enhance services available to sex trafficking victims without completely recreating the wheel.

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